

A Study on the Origins of Guangxi Cai Diao Opera and Vigorous Development

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Received: 20 April 2022; **Accepted:** 1 May 2022; **Published:** 17 May 2022

Abstract:

Opera is an essential way for Chinese cultural exchange and inheritance. Guangxi local opera has a long history, and each has its characteristics. Cai Diao Opera is one of the great opera repertoires originated in northern Guilin in Ming Qing Dynasties and has become famous all over Guangxi. It has become the most popular opera genre of people. With the popularity of Cai Diao Opera, its formation, evolution, inheritance, and cultural protection have received more and more attention to ensure its further and stable development. Thus, the paper focuses on the formation and development of Cai Diao Opera and analyzes Cai Diao in Liuzhou or Guilin city in terms of time and place. Cai Diao Opera was initially played by solo singing and dance as a duet or a two-man act double-reed. But later, there are more players with stories on the stage performance. The introduction to Cai Diao opera is an excellent chance to lay a cultural foundation for the Chinese nation's cultural rejuvenation and flourishing, telling the world a good story about China.

Keywords:

Cai Diao Opera, Origins, Flourishment

1. Introduction

Information technology is developing rapidly, and new things are emerging in the new era. Various cultures are more than before that influenced development of Chinese civilization in some aspects, and national culture is closely related to it. However, under the integration of ethnic groups few people pay attention to the culture of ethnic minorities, and they do not understand each other's regional culture. Thus we need to promote the local ethnic culture further to make it known.

Guilin formed a prosperous city during the Ming and Qing Dynasties that the front courtyard is full of carriages and horses crowded with visitors. Operas that people loved were formed, and Cai Diao Opera began to take place at that time. [1]

This study mainly focuses on the creation and development of Cai Diao, an intangible cultural heritage as an integral part of Chinese culture. Cai Diao Opera learns from the various rituals of Guangxi multinationals, rap artists and other aspects and was approved as a national intangible cultural heritage in 2006. It is the

integration of multi-ethnic arts. As an essential regional Opera in Guangxi Autonomous Region, Cai Diao is a folk expression that ordinary people love to enjoy. It has deep folk customs and local characteristics of lifestyle. Therefore, it is vital to develop local dramas, enhance national cohesion, strengthen the national sense of pride, and enrich Chinese traditional culture.

The performance of the Cai Diao opera was originally acted by singing and dancing. The theme is about tea-picking or festival lanterns etc. It perfectly presented the Guangxi folk songs and stories. They enjoy the life there and praise the love of nature and kindly people around them. Its plot is related to local people's daily life and always positive. The player can be in two roles as a duet. It is the so-called "Dui Zi Tune" that the questioning and answering between the female and male roles with minority dance. The three treasures of Cai Diao are fans, hand towels, and ribbons as its props on the stage. [2]

2. The Origin of Cai Diao

2.1. Definition of Local Traditional Cai Diao Opera

Cai Diao is commonly known as Tune, Cai Diao Opera, Lantern, Ya Hai-Ho, etc. It is a traditional local opera in Guangxi and one of the national intangible cultural heritages. Cai Diao belongs to the lantern theater system, which originated from the "Dui Zi tune" derived from rural singing, dancing, and rap in Guilin and was Created in the rural areas of northwest Guangxi. It is widely spread and has different names. It is called "Cai Diao" in Guilin city; "Diaozi Opera", in Liuzhou, Hechi, and some counties in Wuzhou while in Pingle and Lipu "Cai Diao", "Tea Picking Opera", and "Colored Lantern".

In Other places it is also known as "Da Caicha", "Ho He Opera", etc., and is collectively all referred to as "Cai Diao Opera" after 1955. [3]

Cai Diao repertoires primarily focus on labor, love, family life, etc.. There are a large number of oral manuscripts among the people. The Guilin dialect is used in the performance, with singing and dancing of the young man's role, the role of a young woman, and the clown role, among which the footwork, turn, appearance, fan, and hand flower of the harlequin and female role Dan are distinctive. The footwork is the most prominent.

In 2006, Cai Diao was approved by the State Council of the People's Republic of China to be listed in the first batch of the national intangible cultural heritage with the heritage number of IV-76.

2.2. Origin of Cai Diao

Cai Diao Opera is the favorite local opera of the Guilin people. Originally prevalent in the Ming Dynasty operas in northern Guangxi in the Lantern Festival in Quanzhou, it would cut the lanterns, cut the paper to pierce fish, dragons, flowers, and birds as a play, dress up as girls or as boys, and sing and pick tea together. The Cai Diao spread from the countryside to the cities and from northern Guilin to Liuzhou.

Cai Diao is a unique local drama genre in Guilin. The style, the easy-to-understand Guiliu dialect, and the happy and lively performance form are widely spread between urban and rural areas in Guangxi. Different views on the origin of Cai Diao are as follows.

One opinion holds that in the year of the Ming Dynasty's Emperor Yongle, it was adopted in the sacrifice, combining the tea-picking opera in Fujian and the Nuo opera in Guilin. (Nuo opera and Nuo dance are important forms of blessing and entertainment for local people.) The tunes were gradually formed into local operas with the style of northern Guangxi;

Hunan and Guangxi are neighboring provinces, and Hunan's Huagu Opera is widely known and passed down to various places of Guangxi. Thus some people believe that Cai Diao came from Huagu Opera and developed later on;

In the early Qing Dynasty, Caidiao Opera absorbed Hunan's culture based on Guangxi folk song, dance, and rap. The music and tune came from Huagu Opera and Jiangxi Tea Picking Opera. Therefore, the names of tunes vary, for example, in the northern Guangxi area (Guilin, Liuzhou, Hechi) it is called "Diaozi (Tune Opera)" or "Tea Picking Opera". Besides due to the constant use of the phrase "Ne Ho" "Hi", it is also called "Nah-oh-Hi"; others like "Big Tea Picking", "Color lantern" and "Shanhua Lights" in Pingle, Lipu in the western and southern areas of Guangxi (Baise, Ningming) and other places.

2.3. The Art Form of Cai Diao

To clarify the formation of Cai Tiao, we must start with its original form. So, what was the original form of Cai Diao? Cai Dingguo has Research on Cai Diao Art comments in 1988. [4] He believed that the first repertoire that appeared in Cai Diao was "Dui Zi Tune". It is a play that two people in pair with folk song and dancing. Ji Songling(1995) once stated that When the Cai Diao develops into the role of singing, there is an early stage that the mini-singing form of Cai Diao called "Dui Zi Tune". [5] Shen Guifang (1982) also thinks that is the early form in her masterpiece "Cai Diao Music". [6] Gu Lezhen(2002) said, "When the Cai Diao is performed, female players and clowns are singing and dancing in the "Dui Zi Tune". It can be said to be the original form of Caidiao, so it is also called "Diao Zi Gu". Most of the performances are about the brothers' visits to sisters, going to younger sister's home to spend their leisure time, sending flowers or fans to the lover, or the two lovers singing and dancing together. In the play, the expression of a joyful mood and atmosphere for people is important rather than the he plot and characters. [7]

The commentator believes "Cai Diao was an art form of solo singing in the early days, and the two man act makes fun in the play". This kind of singing is straightforward. Singer wears a mask indicating two characters, with a male on the left and a female on the right, holding a fan in his left hand and a flower towel in right. The singer performs two different roles with different tones and actions without instrumental accompanies. Sometimes there is only a Tiaohu who sings a small tune with the lid of the tripod. [8] It is also a duet with one questioning and the other answering through singing a few tunes. But judging from the performance format described above. A two-man act double-reed is a kind of "Dui Zi Tune" performed by one person. The male and female are having different decorations and props.

3. The Vigorous Development of Cai Diao

3.1. The Cradle of Cai Diao

Guangxi is an area inhabited by many ethnic groups. It is known as the "Hometown of Songs." The ethnic folk music is a splendid art form, and people of all ethnic

groups can sing and dance. The “Dui Zi Tune” evolved under the influence of the folk song, dance, and rap, which is the earliest Cai Diao Opera. It is said that during Qing Dynasty’s Daoguang and Guangxu Emperor, Cai Diao was influenced by the Hunan Huagu Drum Opera, Jiangxi Tea Picking Opera, and Gui Opera. As the investigation and the use of relevant cultural and historical files for identification and analysis of the text of Caidiao opera, issues such as the origin of Guangxi Caidiao, the evolution and development of Caidiao, and the relationship between Caidiao and Huagu Opera can be further clarified. [9]

As the art of word of mouth, Caidiao was first popular in the city of Guilin, Liuzhou, and Yizhou. It continued to spread to the south. The play has gradually developed from “two short plays” of the clown and the female roles to the “three short plays” of male, clown and female roles with stories. In the years around the Revolution of 1911, Cai Diao developed from rural to urban areas, gradually coming to the urban stage and expanding progressively from a small theater troupe with seven people to a semi-professional company with twenty or thirty ones. Cai Diao came to the brink of disappearing in 1927. After founding of the People’s Republic of China, Cai Diao got a new life with the establishment of two professional troupes in Guilin and Liuzhou, the Guihua Tune Troupe and Peasant Tune Troupe.

3.2. Popularity in Home and Abroad

Amateur tune troupes spontaneously established by farmers are also very common. The decades from the 1950s to the beginning of the 21st century were the heyday of the development of Cai Diao. Dragon Girl and Hanpeng came to Beijing from the countryside and walked into Zhongnanhai to perform for the government leaders. Since then, “Cai Diao” has its official name of “Cai Diao Opera”. In 1959, the Cai Diao Play “Liu Sanjie” was created by Liuzhou Cai Diao Opera Troupe attracted many audiences in Beijing. That play was one of the programs for celebrating the 10th anniversary of the PRC. [10] From then on, the Caidiao play became famous at home and abroad. This repertoire was made into a movie or a stage art film, which significantly promoted the development of Guangxi’s Cai Diao.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the modern drama Joyful Event was rated as an excellent script, which gave Cai Diao a breakthrough in themes. Wu Zi Tu, a wonderful drama, promotes the traditional moral of “filial piety first” and refutes the unfilial behavior of ugly girls with profound educational significance. The development of Cai Diao has once again reached a climax. The hard work has paid off. The creators of Cai Diao play have continued their efforts. With Na Ho Yi Ho Hi they won 23 national awards, such as Wenhua Award and China Cao Yu Drama and Literature Award in the 1990s.[3] Since then, Guangxi Cai Diao has been well-known at home and abroad, and it has had a deep influence on the hearts of Chinese people. A wonderful flower in the theater garden, Cai Diao has experienced decades of ups and downs. Today, the once-popular Cai Diao art is facing a dilemma. Cai Diao troupes all over Guangxi face economic and script scarcity problems. Fortunately, China launched the “Rescue and Protection of Chinese Human Oral and Intangible Heritage” project in 2002. In May 2006, Cai Diao was listed in the first batch of national intangible cultural heritage with the State Council's approval, which significantly strengthened this cultural heritage’s protection, inheritance and promotion.

3.3. *Cai Diao Opera in Lingui*

Lingui is one of the birthplaces of Guangxi Cai Diao. Lingui Cai Diao is known as the “Joyful event” with its witty and lively style. There are many existing traditional dramas, almost all of which reflect the production, ordinary life, and love of the working people. There are also a few serious dramas and tragedies. In the Qing Dynasty, Cai Diao became popular in Lingui, and Liangjiang Town became a well-known “TiaoZiwo” because of its talents and frequent performances. [11]

More and more TV programs and movies came to ordinary life in modernization. Audiences are aging, and performances are shrinking. In addition, the advent of the Internet has changed people’s lives tremendously, and the performance form of Caidiao seems a little monotonous in that situation. [10]

3.4. *Flourishment of Cai Diao*

After founding of the People’s Republic of China, the Lingui Cai Diao flourished, and many villages set up the amateur theater troupes. Fifty amateur theater troupes were in the county in 1951 and increased to 250 (including Lingchuan) in 1956. In 1959, the number of amateur troupes grew to 337 in 1959. The year 1960 to 1961 was a difficult economic period; and there were infrequent Cai Diao activities. But the Cai Diao team reorganized themselves everywhere after 1962. From 1954 to 1965, the county’s folk art performances were held five times. From the middle of the “Cultural Revolution” to 1980, the County Cultural Center provided support and guidance to art team. In 1977, amateur Cai Diao teams re-emerged in the countryside with a growth of 54 teams of 1,300 players that year to 162 groups of 4,150 players in 1982. Performances were held in the three towns of Wutong, Liutang, and Liangjiang in the following years.

Due to the increase in modern entertainment such as television and video, the troupe gradually decreased. In 1990, Lingui amateur theater troupe dropped to 43 of 1,046 players. On December 6, 2012, Linzhu County’s Cai Diao Group was established, and it became the first county-level one. Lingui people have preferred to watch the Cai Diao since ancient times. For major festivals, marriages, and birthdays in the vast rural areas, Cai Diao players will go to the village to sing for a few days and nights to show congratulations. Lingui County Cultural Troupe has created and arranged more than 100 programs in recent years, including singing and dancing with 168 shows in the countryside.

In early December 2007, Lingui successfully held the first Farmer Cai Diao Competition. Ten repertoires out of fourteen were modern dramas, reflecting the teams’ innovative spirit and courage. The modern Cai Diao opera can keep up with the pace of the times, focusing on Internet cafes, new rural construction, and urban and rural cleaning projects. Due to the effort from all kinds of life, many repertoires including Lingui Cai Diao have been rejuvenated and welcomed by more people. Nowadays, Lingui Cultural Square is often staged with Cai Diao on holiday, and more people appreciate the infinite charm of Cai Diao as an excellent traditional culture.

We will adhere to the “people-centered” creative orientation under the awareness of cultural self-confidence and look forward to developing Chinese opera with confidence.

4. Conclusions

Cai Diao is the favorite opera of the Guilin people. We know from the play that it tells the historical events and people's ordinary lives. People's kindness, integrity, love of life, bravery and positive attitude are perfectly presented in Cai Diao.

Cai Diao Opera is developing and learning from other operas or art forms and it can be a rare treasure in Guangxi.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

Acknowledgments

The author would like to acknowledge the supervisor, Pro. Rong Li. She is a resourceful professor who has guided the author in the writing of this paper, also, acknowledge the Guilin Library, which provides me with many free materials to study the Cai Diao.

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